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TENNESSEE FARMERS REPORT CROP ACREAGE FOR 2000

Based on a June 1 survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee farmers planted more corn and cotton this year compared to 1999 while reducing both soybean and burley tobacco acreage. Gene Danekas, State Statistician for Tennessee gave several reasons for the changes. "Prior to planting, farmers were looking at commodity prices and long term weather forecasts to help in their decision making. At that time, corn and cotton prices looked better than soybean prices did; as a result, more acreage shifted from soybeans into these two commodities." Danekas went on to explain how the drought advisory issued earlier in the year for Tennessee affected farmer decisions. "Producers remember how the soybean crop was devastated last year during mid-summer. Therefore many chose cotton because of it's ability to withstand dry conditions and corn because it matures earlier than soybeans, giving it a better chance of missing a potential mid-summer drought." Danekas also noted that farmers had excellent weather conditions this spring, and most were able to fulfill all of their corn and cotton planting intentions. This has not been the case in previous years when flooding forced farmers to put acreage into soybeans due to it's longer planting window. Survey results show that farmers planted 600,000 acres of **cotton** this year, up 30,000 from a year ago. **Corn** acreage increased 20,000 from 1999 and currently stands at 650,000 acres. This combined 50,000 acre increase came directly from **soybeans** which are forecast at 1.20 million acres, down 4 percent from last year. Producers harvested 350,000 acres of **winter wheat** for grain this year, while **burley tobacco** acreage is estimated at 45,000 acres, down 18 percent from last year and a direct result of the reduction in quota. The survey also showed that no-till usage in 2000 increased sharply from a year ago, possibly due to rising fuel costs.

COTTON ACREAGE UP FOR SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR

Between 1995 and 1998 the State's cotton acreage dropped 250,000 acres, but cotton acreage has bounced back over the last two years. Factors such as price, improved seed, and the boll weevil eradication program have all played a major roll in cotton's growing appeal. Cotton acreage for 2000 is forecast at 600,000 acres, up 30,000 from last year and the highest level in the State since 1995. Weather conditions during planting were favorable, and most producers got their crop planted on time. Insects have been a problem this spring, but the crop is currently rated in mostly good-to-fair condition.

CORN ACREAGE REBOUNDS FROM 1999

After reaching a nine year low in 1999, corn acreage in the Volunteer State jumped slightly this year with an estimated 650,000 planted acres. An unseasonably warm Spring allowed planting to get off to an early start, but producers did battle soggy field conditions early on. Despite the limited setbacks, growers made excellent progress and planting was virtually completed by the end of May. Weed and insect pressure have been fairly light, but dry conditions during the first part of June did cause some concern. Since that time, most areas have received rain and the majority of the crop is in good-to-excellent condition.

SOYBEAN ACREAGE DOWN 4 PERCENT FROM LAST YEAR

Increases in both corn and cotton acreage came at the direct expense of soybeans. Soybean acreage is estimated at 1.20 million acres, 50,000 acres less than the previous two years and the lowest level in the State since 1996. Price, weather conditions during planting, and the constant threat of drought were all factors leading to the shift in acreage. Producers are currently planting their double crop soybeans behind harvested wheat fields, and planting should be completed within the next two weeks if conditions remain favorable. Eighty-seven percent of the crops is currently rated in good-to-excellent condition.

(OVER)

BURLEY ACREAGE DOWN SHARPLY

The 45 percent cut in quota for the 2000 crop year has led to higher lease rates which in turn has led to an 18 percent drop in burley acreage from a year ago. Total acreage is estimated at 45,000 acres, 10,000 acres less than 1999 and the lowest level in Tennessee since 1995. On the other hand, allotment increases for both dark fire-cured and dark air-cured have led to an acreage increase for these varieties. Type 22, Eastern dark-fired and Type 23, Western dark-fired are estimated at 7,600 and 610 acres, respectively. Type 35, Dark air-cured is estimated at 630 acres. Ideal weather conditions allowed transplanting to progress slightly ahead of normal this year, but some growers had to re-set some fields due to dry conditions. Insect and disease pressure has been fairly light this spring, although growers are constantly scouting their fields.

ANOTHER EXCELLENT YEAR FOR WHEAT PRODUCERS

For the second straight year, most wheat growers have something to smile about. Warm, dry conditions during the month of June have allowed producers to make excellent progress with harvest and most areas report above average yields. Disease pressure was fairly normal this year, with no major crop damage reported. Farmers planted 550,000 acres of wheat last fall, up 50,000 acres from 1999. From the total planted acres, 350,000 were harvested for grain. The remaining 200,000 acres were planted as a cover crop, harvested for hay, or cut for silage. The next yield forecast will be released July 12.

HAY ACREAGE REACH RECORD LEVELS

Good weather conditions coupled with fears of another summer drought, led Tennessee farmers to cut a record number of hay acreage this spring. Based on survey results, 35,000 acres of alfalfa will be harvested during 2000, up 5000 acres from a year earlier. In addition, 1.90 million acres of all other hay will be harvested, up nearly 3 percent from a year earlier. Farmers wanted to cut as much this spring as possible in case they are not able to get additional cuttings later in the year. Most report good quality and better than expected yields.

PLANTED AND HARVESTED ACRES OF PRINCIPAL CROPS: TENNESSEE AND U.S., 1999-2000

| Crop | Planted Acres | | Harvested Acres | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| | 1999 | 2000 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 / 1999 |
| | 1,000 Acres | | Percent | | |
| TENNESSEE | | | | | |
| Corn | 630 | 650 | 570 | 590 | 104 |
| Cotton | 570 | 600 | 565 | ¹ | - |
| Soybeans | 1,250 | 1,200 | 1,190 | 1,160 | 97 |
| Winter Wheat | 500 | 550 | 340 | 350 | 103 |
| Sorghum | 20 | 20 | 18 | 16 | 89 |
| Hay, all | - | - | 1,880 | 1,935 | 103 |
| Alfalfa | - | - | 30 | 35 | 117 |
| All other | - | - | 1,850 | 1,900 | 103 |
| Tobacco, all | - | - | 63.17 | 53.84 | 85 |
| Eastern dark-fired (22) | - | - | 7.00 | 7.60 | 109 |
| Western dark-fired (23) | - | - | .57 | .61 | 107 |
| Burley (31) | - | - | 55.00 | 45.00 | 82 |
| One sucker (35) | - | - | .60 | .63 | 105 |
| UNITED STATES | | | | | |
| Corn | 77,431 | 79,579 | 70,537 | 73,088 | 104 |
| Cotton ² | 14,874 | 15,552 | 13,425 | ¹ | - |
| Soybeans | 73,780 | 74,501 | 72,476 | 73,474 | 101 |
| Winter Wheat | 43,431 | 43,349 | 35,572 | 35,401 | 100 |
| Sorghum | 9,288 | 8,805 | 8,544 | 8,110 | 95 |
| Hay, all | - | - | 63,160 | 62,181 | 98 |
| Alfalfa | - | - | 23,985 | 23,767 | 99 |
| All other | - | - | 39,175 | 38,414 | 98 |
| Tobacco, all | - | - | 647.16 | 493.84 | 76 |
| Eastern dark-fired (22) | - | - | 10.75 | 11.60 | 108 |
| Western dark-fired (23) | - | - | 4.07 | 4.41 | 108 |
| Burley (31) | - | - | 303.60 | 201.00 | 66 |
| One sucker (35) | - | - | 3.45 | 3.63 | 105 |

¹Estimate to be released August 12, 2000. ²U.S. acreage includes American Pima cotton.